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ACTION EA-15

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S E C R E T VIENTIANE 0271

SUBJECT: GENERAL VANG PAO'S VIEWS ON FUTURE OF PDJ AREA
 AND LAO POLITICS

1. DURING VISIT BY CONGRESSMAN JOHN MARSH, DEMOCRAT VIRGINIA, JAN 12 VANG PAO GAVE EXCELLENT BRIEFING ON MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN PDJ AREA AND POLITICAL FUTURE THAT AREA, IN REFERRING TO POSITION OF HIS FORCES HE EMPHASIZED THAT HE HAS NEVER GIVEN SERIOUS THOUGHT TO REPULSING ENEMY FROM ALL OF NORTHEAST LAOS FROM ENEMY'S CAPABILITIES SO FAR EXCEED THOSE OF FAR THAT THIS WOULD BE RIDICULOUS. HE DID, HOWEVER, INITIATE "ABOUT FACE" WHEN ENEMY WAS THREATENING LUANG PRABANG AND VIENTIANE PLAIN FROM ITS ADVANCED POSITION AT SALA PHOU KOUN. "ABOUT FACE" SURPRISED AS MUCH AS ANYONE ELSE BUT IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT ENEMY WAS OVER-EXTENDED. VANG PAO WAS ABLE TO IMPROVE HIS DEFENSIVE POSITION BY PUSING ENEMY OF PDJ WHICH HAS TRADITIONALLY BEEN NEUTRALIST AREA AND BY ELIMINATING ENEMY ADVANCED CACHES. SINCE THIS WAS DONE, RLG SENT IN NEUTRALIST FORCES, WHICH ACCORDING TO VANG PAO WAS QUITE NATURAL AND APPROPRIATE. HE INTRODUCED COL. SOULIVANH AS PRIME MINISTERS REPRESENTATIVE IN PDJ AREA AND LEADER OF FAN FORCES. HE THEN DESCRIBED THE FUTURE OF THE PDJ AS ONE TO BE OCCUPIED AS ALWAYS BY THE NEUTRALIST. SOUVANNA PHOUMA, WHOM HE STRONGLY SUPPORTS, MADE KHANG KHAY HIS HEADQUARTERS AND IF IT HAD NOT BEEN FOR NORTH

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VIETNAMESE AGGRESSION THE NEUTRALIST WOULD STILL BE THERE.

1. FOR THE FUTURE OF THE COUNTRY VANG PAO SAYS IT CAN ONLY BE NEUTRALIST FOR IT IS TOO SMALL TO DETERMINE ITS OWN FUTURE AND ITS SAFTY LIES IN THE HANDS OF THE GREAST POWERS THAT SIGNED THE 1962 AGREEMENTS. ALTHOUGH TINY LAOS WOULD DO ITS BEST TO ARREST NORTH VIETNAMESE AGGRESSION, HERE AGAIN IT IS TOO SMALL AND POOR TO BE EFFECTIVE AND IT LOOKS TO THE GREAT POWERS TO STOP THE CURRENT WARFARE. IN THE LONGER RUN, LAOS MUST ALSO HAVE A NEUTRALIST GOVERNMENT. THE LEFT, I.E. THE PATHET LAO, NO LONGER EXISTS, THE RIGHT I.E. PHOUMI NOSAVAN, HAS FLED THE COUNTRY. THEREFORE VANG PAO, HERETOFORE RIGHTIST INCLINED, IS NOW SOLIDLY BEHIND THE KING AND THE NEUTRALIST PRIME MINISTER. VANG PAO WAS THEN MOST COMPLIMENTARY ABOUT U.S. AID, POINTING OUT THAT THE USG ALONE AMONG THE SIGNATORIES OF GENEVA 1962 AGREEMENTS WAS ASSISTING TINY LAOS IN DEFENDING ITSELF.

3. FINALLY, VANG PAO SAID HE WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO RECEIVING "POLITICAL LEADERS" AT LONG TIENG ON JAN 17 TO DEVELOP FURTHER THE NEUTRALIST PARTY OF SOUVANNA PHOUMA.

4. COMMENT: VANG PAO SPOKE WITH GREAT EMOTION AND FORCE. HE CERTAINLY MADE ALL THE PROPER NOISES AND WE BELIEVE HE WAS SINCERE AT LEAST WHILE HE WAS SPEAKING. HE OBVIOUSLY HAS GOTTEN THE WORD ON THE JAN 10 MEETING (VIENTIANE 240) AND IS DOING HIS UTMOST TO SUPPORT SOUVANNA IN HIS EFFORTS. WE ARE SOMEWHAT PERPLEXED BY HIS REFERENCE TO JAN 17 MEETING AT LONG TIENG AND ARE ENDEAVORING ASCERTAIN PRECISELY WHOME HE HAS IN MIND. AS OF THE MOMENT I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT PRIME MINISTER WILL BE AMONG THE DIGNITARIES MEETING WITH VANG PAO. GP-3.
GODLEY

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